

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-05

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R 241953Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4591

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, FR, UR, CI

SUBJECT: SOVIET ARMS SALES TO CHILE

1. SUMMARY: WEEKLY PRESS STORY ABOUT SOVIET ARMS SALES TO CHILE THROUGH A BULGARIAN FIRM ELICITS WRATH FROM IZVESTIA AND THIS LEADS TO DIGGING OF MORE FACTS CORROBORATING ORIGINAL STORY AND ASSURING REPETITION OF THE REPORT FOR THREE WEEKS. STORY COMES AT TIME WHEN USSR IMAGE IN FRANCE IS SOMEWHAT TARNISHED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SATIRICAL AND LEFT-LEANING "LE CANARD ENCHAINE" REPORTED IN ITS 15 OCT ISSUE THAT SOVIET ARMS AND SPECIFICALLY T-54 TANKS HAVE BEEN SOLD RECENTLY TO CHILE. NOT LATER THAN THE FOLLOWING MORNING (16 OCT) "IZVESTIA" LASHED OUT AT LE CANARD WHICH IT

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SAID CARRIED A "REPUGNANT SMELL OF PUTRIFICATION" BY

REPORTING THAT THE USSR HAD AGREED TO SUCH SALES TO CHILE'S MILITARY REGIME. SPEED OF SOVIET RESPONSE SUGGESTS NOT ONLY PROMPT REPORTING TO MOSCOW OF LE CANARD'S ARTICLE BUT ALSO HIGH DEGREE OF SENSITIVITY.

3. THE 16 AUGUST ISSUE OF LE MONDE PICKED UP THE CANARD STORY AND THE IZVESTIA RESPONSE AND COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS ONE MORE INSTANCE WHERE "THE SOVIETS WISHED FRENCH AUTHORITIES WOULD INTERVENE TO PREVENT THE PUBLICATION OF STORIES WHICH THE USSR DOES NOT LIKE. NOTHING IN A WAY OF EXPLANATION WILL EVER CONVINCE THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES, WROTE LE MONDE, THAT WHAT IS POSSIBLE IN MOSCOW IS INCONCEIVABLE IN PARIS."

4. THE 22 OCT ISSUE OF LE CANARD NOT ONLY CONFIRMED THE ARMS SALES STORY BUT ADDED MORE DETAILS, I.E., THAT THE SALE WAS CARRIED OUT BY THE BULGARIAN KANTEX FIRM WHICH ARRANGED THE SHIPPING FROM THE YUGOSLAVIA PORT OF RIJEKA OF A CONSIGNMENT OF T-54 TANKS WITH MUNITIONS AND SPARE PARTS. "WHAT IS ALL THIS VIRTUOUS INDIGNATION (ON THE PART OF THE USSR)?" ASKED THE WEEKLY. "WOULD THEY WANT US TO BELIEVE THAT CONTRARY TO THE U.S. FRANCE AND BRITAIN -- WHOSE ARMS SALES LE CANARD HAS OFTEN DENOUNCED. THE SOVIET UNION FOR ITS PART IS ALWAYS SCRUPULOUS IN ITS PUBLIC OR CLANDESTINE CHOICE OF CLIENTS. FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT BE ASTONISHED, LET US RECALL THAT THE CZECHOSLOVAK OMNIPOL FIRM SOLD WEAPONS TO BOTH SIDES DURING THE BIAFRA WAR...AS WELL AS LIGHT WEAPONS TO THE PORTUGUESE DICTATOR CAETANO DURING HIS COLONIAL WARS. MORE RECENTLY THE EXTREME RIGHTISTS OF THE LEBANESE PHALANGE PURCHASED WEAPONS FROM THE BULGARIANS...AND EACH TIME THE SOVIET UNION WAS CONSULTED."

5. THE NEXT STEP IN THE UNFOLDING SAGA OF LE CANARD STORY IS A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF THE SOVIET INFORMATION BUREAU IN PARIS PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF 24 OCT WHICH REFERS TO LE CANARD ARTICLE AS A FALSE STORY AND ATTEMPTS TO ARGUE THAT WHAT LE MONDE CONSIDERS AS "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IS ACTUALLY LICENSE TO DEFAME THE SOVIET UNION."

6. A CANARD SOURCE TOLD US THAT THE EDITORS AND STAFF ARE DELIGHTED BY THE SOVIET REACTION, BECAUSE WITHOUT IT THE STORY WOULD HAVE DIED DOWN AND WOULD NOT EVEN

HAVE BEEN PICKED UP BY LE MONDE. SOURCE POINTED OUT ALSO THAT NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROTEST AND PUTRIFICATION SMELL, NEITHER THE IZVESTIA NOR THE INFORMATION CHIEF IN PARIS HAVE EVER STATED FLATLY THAT THERE WERE NO SOVIET ARMS SALES TO CHILE. LE CANARD DOES NOT INTEND TO DROP THE STORY, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT THE FIGHT WITH A SOVIET NEWSPAPER HAS PROVIDED AN INCENTIVE FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE INFORMATION

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SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 MC-02 ACDA-05

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ON THE SUBJECT TO COME FORTH TO SUPPORT CANARD'S CASE AGAINST THE SOVIETS. NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE WILL CONTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OMNIPOL'S ACTIVITIES.

7. SOURCE PROVIDED US ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARD-

ING THE BULGARIAN FIRM WHOSE CORRECT NAME IS KINTEX
INSTEAD OF KANTEX AS ERRONEOUSLY REPORTED IN THE
MAGAZINE. IT IS LOCATED ON BLVD. ANTON IVANOFF IN
SOFIA AND ITS PRESIDENT'S NAME IS NAIDENOFF. THE
BRAINS BEHIND THE COMPANY, HOWEVER, IS A MAN BY THE
NAME OF BATIEFF, WHO IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN IN BEIRUT
LAST SPRING AND WAS REPORTED TO HAVE VISITED LEBANON
ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SINCE THEN. SOURCE BELIEVES
THAT KINTEX IS AN IMPORTANT SUPPLIER OF ARMS TO THE
PHALANGE IN LEBANON.
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8. COMMENT: NOTWITHSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF
CANARD'S ALLEGATIONS, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE SOVIETS
WERE WELL ADVISED IN CHALLENGING LE CANARD THEREBY
CALLING EVEN MORE ATTENTION TO THE STORY, LET ALONE
ASSURING ITS PROLONGATION. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE
SINCE STORY BROKE AT A TIME WHEN USSR IMAGE IS
SUFFERING NOT ONLY FROM THE HANDLING OF GISCARD'S
VISIT IN MOSCOW BUT ALSO FROM WHAT THE FRENCH PERCEIVE
AS EVIDENCE THAT THE USSR IS PREPARING TO DRAG ITS
FEET WITH REGARD TO CSCE IMPLEMENTATION.

9. OF INTEREST ALSO IS THE FACT THAT LE CANARD CAN
COUNT ON INFORMATION WHICH IS BEING VOLUNTEERED BY
READERS WHO WERE SPURRED BY IZVESTIA'S "PUTRIFICATION
SMELL."

10. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFO THAT ADDRESSEES MAY
PICK UP.
RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ARMS, MILITARY SALES, SUBSIDIARIES, BUSINESS FIRMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS27805
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750370-1119
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751019/aaaaarcx.tel
Line Count: 205
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2003 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET ARMS SALES TO CHILE
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, FR, UR, CI, KINTEX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006